



# **CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**

## **COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** June 16, 2009

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Fire Prevention Division, Fire Department

**SUBJECT:** Renewal Of Levy For Fiscal Year 2009-2010 For The Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Declaring Its Intention to Continue Vegetation Road Clearance, Implementation of a Defensible Space Inspection and Assistance Program, and Implementation of a Vegetation Management Program Within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones; Declaring the Work to be of More Than General or Ordinary Benefit and Describing the District to be Assessed to Pay the Costs and Expenses Thereof; Approving the Engineer's Report, Confirming Diagram and Assessment, and Ordering Levy of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

### **DISCUSSION:**

On July 11, 2006 the City Council adopted Resolution 06-064 declaring its intention to order the expansion of vegetation road clearance, implementation of a defensible space inspection and assistance program, and implementation of a vegetation management program within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones. The District would be assessed for the expenses provided in an Engineer's Report that outlines the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District expenses and the assessment formula.

The City subsequently renewed the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 and Fiscal Year 2008-2009. In the District's third year, work continued to further reduce flammable vegetation in the foothill zones. The Road Clearance Program has resulted in the clearance of an additional 14 miles of roadways in the high fire hazard areas. The total number of Defensible Space Inspections provided throughout the entire assessment area has increased to more than 100. Chipping services for homeowners continues throughout the District, allowing a cost effective way for homeowners to dispose of cut material. The Vegetation Management program completed initial treatment in the Las Canoas area, a prescription that involved 20 acres of vegetation management. A biological assessment and the prescribed treatment of 8 acres throughout the Van's Meadow area of Skofield Park was also completed.

The District's third year also brought the tragedies of the Tea Fire and the Jesusita Fire, a reminder of the need for renewed commitment to the District. The properties destroyed in the fires were in both the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones. As a result of the fires, the City is in the process of issuing a refund of the 2008 assessment to Tea Fire survivors and Jesusita Fire survivors with homes suffering 50% or greater damage. Resolution 06-064 which formed the District provides that, as applied to any parcel, the assessment may be corrected, cancelled or refunded, as appropriate, by order of the City Council or Fire Chief. Any such refund is limited to the applicable fiscal year. The County Assessor's Office will reassess properties in the Tea Fire and Jesusita Fire areas for Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

The duration of the assessment was established as one year, allowing for its annual renewal with a Consumer Price Index increase of not to exceed 4%, by approval of the City Council. The District may be annually renewed without a further vote or balloting process. The assessment rate for fiscal year 2009-2010, as determined in the Engineer's Report based upon the special benefit received, will be \$69.83 per single family parcel in the Foothill Zone and \$86.58 in the Extreme Foothill Zone. This amount is the same amount as last year due to a negligible increase in the Consumer Price Index. Staff recommends that the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District be continued for Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

As required in the adopting resolution, an updated Engineer's Report has been prepared and includes the proposed budget and assessment rate. The updated Engineer's Report must be considered by the City Council at a noticed public hearing and serves as the basis for the continuation of the assessments. The updated Engineer's Report is available for review in the City Council reading file and at Fire Department Administration at 925 De La Vina Street and the City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 735 Anacapa Street.

On June 2, 2009 the Council adopted Resolution 09-036 to renew the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District within the Foothill and Extreme Foothill Zones and set a time of 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, in the City Council Chambers for a public hearing on the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District. Staff recommends that the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District be continued for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 to fund and deliver these successful mitigation programs.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

Vegetation removed through vegetation road clearance or the inspection and assistance program is chipped and spread back on to the ground or spread in areas of local parks.

The goal is reuse of at least 80% of all chipped material locally avoiding the cost of disposal fees, extra vehicle trips and landfill use. The goal was exceeded by 10%. Non-native pest plants are not chipped but instead are hauled off site to be disposed of properly.

**PREPARED BY:** Joe Poiré, Fire Marshal

**SUBMITTED BY:** Andrew DiMizio, Interim Fire Chief

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office